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A PALACE OF FAME FOR WASHINGTON

IT is a great question and one that has dogged the steps of man throughout the course of history, how to reward citizens who "deserve well of the republic." In England and Germany they grant hereditary titles of nobility in order to afford decorative stars and name-handles to the descendants; in China they confer such titles and eulogies retrospectively on the ancestors of the worthy citizen, by which they display characteristic wisdom. In England they also spend liberally the tax-payer's money to furnish to these successful admirals and generals the wherewithal to support their new titles with dignity, while other countries, not so plethoric of purse, will confer almost any honor short of royalty that does not draw a dollar from the public funds! The Greeks and Romans had much to say of disinterestedness on the part of public men, citing those who were content with the parsley and laurel crowns of victors in athletic contests as citizens after the proper pattern. All are agreed that some recognition is due the persons who have saved a country from conquest or introduced good laws or made useful discoveries in the arts and sciences. But how is this to be done?

Emerson exhorted his generation in these words:

Let picture, statue, park and hall,
Ballad, flag and festival
The past restore, the day adorn
And make each morrow a new morn.

Different nations perform this pious duty with variants on the common practice. We have for instance a curious survival of some ancient pagan magic in the colossal wooden image of Von Hindenburg at Berlin—which is being hammered full of nails by the devoted public to afford the latter the pleasure of having a hand in the statue! In Germany particularly there are rules with regard to monuments. For example: Though Prince Bismarck was particularly proud of his uniform as an officer of cuirassiers and liked to have Lenbach paint him in that harness, yet, among a vast number of statues to the Iron Chancellor, you will find none in which he is shown astride of a horse. Nor will you discover equestrian statues even of Moltke or Roon, those idols of the military caste. Why? Because only royalties are allowed to be presented in such commanding attitudes.

HIERARCHY IN MONUMENTS

There is a hierarchy in monuments which cleaves to rank. Below the royalties there are some who may have colossal standing portraits, like Bismarck and Hindenburg, others who must put up with heroic statues, or merely those of life size; the lower ranks must be content with busts—the intellectuals can be fobbed off with bas-reliefs, or simply go without! Ludicrous as these distinctions may appear to us, one must not forget that we benighted outlanders are deficient in many ways and particularly in lacking of reverence for crowned heads, a failing we shall be soundly cured of when all goes well with those mighty captains of war—who conduct campaigns so unselfishly and without hope of an equestrian monument, whether they win or lose.

Frenchmen, on the other hand, show the levity of their nature by hoisting onto the back of a bronze horse some General sprung from the meanest folk, and they put the cap on their frivolity by regarding those people, who fail to honor their benefactors without restrictions as to form, no better than slaves who richly deserve the rulers they support. So difficult is it, in Europe at least, to keep art and politics on separate plates!

The satiric portion of the press follows precedents long ago established among the ancients when it chastens with persiflage or with savage scorn the establishment of such a Hall of Fame as New York University has placed on a hill above the meandering Harlem. Man's vainglory was a topic for reproof long before Noah and his cloudbursts: That pride of family which induced a Roman to spend his substance on busts of his ancestors in bronze, marble, wood and wax and parade them before the public during solemn affairs like funerals, continues to be the butt of moralists and social levellers. It is a tradition that the satirist shall aim his plumed shaft at any deviation from sober mediocrity among the departed great, on the ground that these same famous citizens, held up thus to public approval, have been selected by the foolish! The reproof is not aimed against the creation of pantheons or halls of fame, as if they tended to rouse pride, national or personal vanity, but against the way in which such temples to glory are managed. At bottom what the satirist means is this: If *he* had been consulted and obeyed, all would have been well! Not so much the purpose of the New York University in setting up a hall of fame has suffered blame from the critics; rather was it the selection that was made of the names to be commemorated.

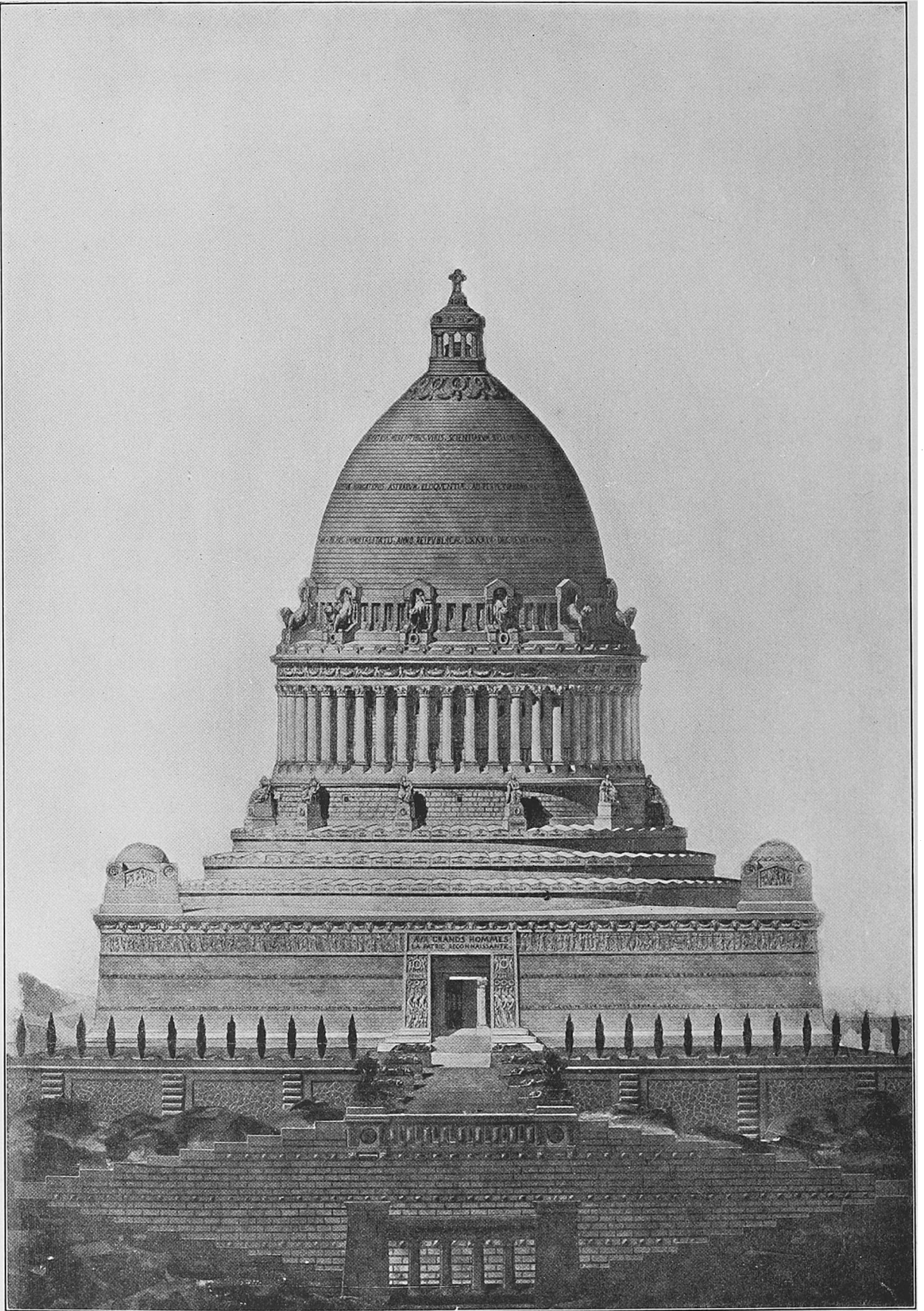
HARDSHIP IN SELECTION

And truly, this is a difficulty not easily met, whether the choice be left to the head of an institution or scattered over a faculty or solemnly voted upon by hundreds or thousands. The *pantheon*, the "all holy" Pantheon at Rome contains a monument to Vittore Emmanuele *Il Re Galantuomo* as well as to Raffaello—but none to Dante or Michelangelo. The Panthéon at Paris was inaugurated as a hall of fame after being a church dedicated to Genevieve, Saint and patroness of Paris:

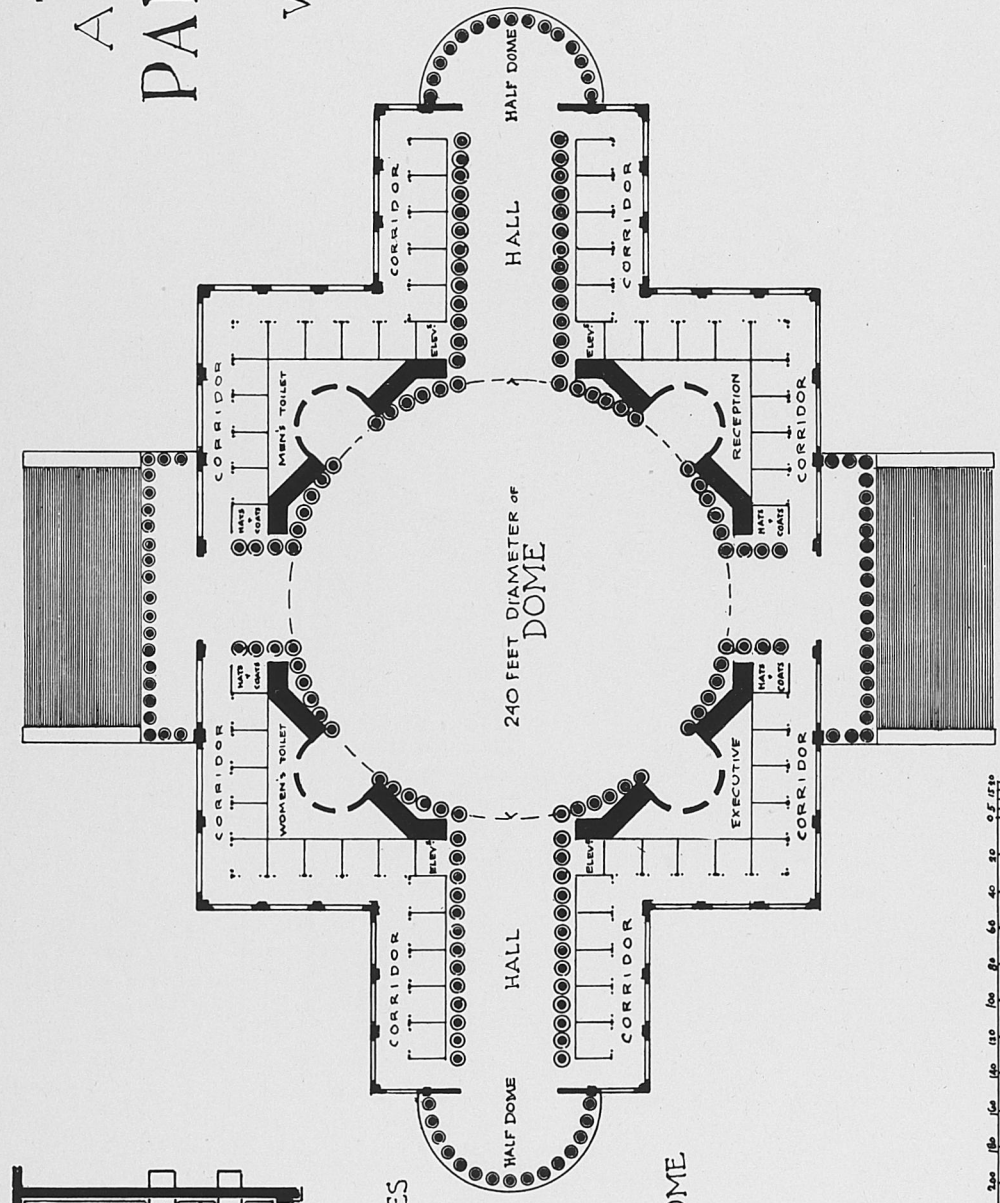
*C'est pourquoi on l'appelait
Geneviève de Brabant!*

But Mirabeau, the first to be honored thus, was not permitted by his enemies to leave his bones there. Out goes Mirabeau, in comes Marat! Then, later on, out goes Marat himself! Who cares to count the vicissitudes of the Panthéon at Paris, as the pendulum of politics swings first toward radical and then toward conservative, and turns it first into a religious, then into a secular public building?

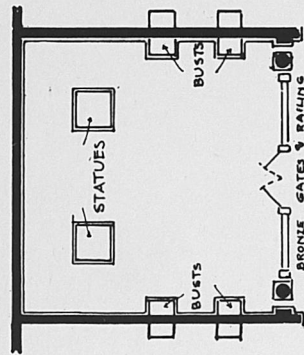
Though a Greek word and though the very idea of a hall of fame was Greek, yet Greece had no specific building called a *Pantheon* dedicated to portraits of citizens. The nearest approach was the sporadic "treasure house" erected at Delphi by dif-



SUGGESTED AMERICAN PANTHEON AT WASHINGTON D.C.



GROUND PLAN



TYPE OF
SEPARATE GALLERIES
FOR
52 STATES
EACH 20 FT. SQUARE
540 FT. = LENGTH OF BLDG
340 FT. = WIDTH " "
240 FT. = DIAMETER OF DOME.



ferent States of Greece where the statues of heroes, kings and eminent men were gifts dedicated usually to Apollo. A similar place was the Temple to Hera at Olympia. And not men alone; for was not the naughty Phryné to be seen in one of these Delphian "treasuries" alongside the statue of a famous Spartan King—Archidamos—having been offered to Apollo in gilded bronze by the grateful inhabitants of her native town? So Pausanias tells us.

We see then that there is plenty of classic precedent for halls of fame. Indeed, it is more than probable that from the earliest times the pagan nations of Europe and Asia commemorated their leaders in war (and perhaps at times their benefactors in peace) by placing rudely shaped effigies of them along with their gods in those sacred places, taboo to the common folk, which were generally maintained in remote and unpeopled spots. This was true to a comparatively late date of the pagan Prussians and Lithuanians near the Baltic.

The German Kaiser has glorified his own ancestors and predecessors in Prussia by a series of statues along the Sieges-allée in Berlin. In this case they are all in the open air, instead of collected into a palace or a temple. But Southern Germany has a hall of fame of her own, entry to which does not require princely or royal rank.

They did these things better in the last century under a permanent monarchy like Bavaria's, it would seem, or at least with greater smoothness. There's the German "Walhalla" at Regensburg on the Danube, erected by Ludwig I after designs by Leo von Klenze, a great big gray marble Parthenon with two pediments full of sculpture, decorated with bas-reliefs and paintings within, together with pedestals for nigh two hundred busts of distinguished Teutons. This hall of fame has subsisted more than three-score years. Then there are St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey in London, which are two pantheons or halls of fame for the English, British and Irish. It is curious to note that both these edifices were and remain churches, in which religious services are held, whilst the Panthéon at Paris and the Walhalla at Regensburg are entirely secular, separated entirely from ideas of religion such as Christianity affords. From this fact should one argue, that Christian ideas are better known and better practised in Great Britain than in France and Bavaria? Or does it merely emphasize the oft-remarked conservatism in the British character?

It is plain enough that with regard to halls of fame there is little to see in Europe which can be taken as precedent fit for our imitation. Prone as our architects and artists generally are to lean hard upon some European original, no matter how unsuited it may be to our needs, habits and climate, there is nothing in Panthéon or Walhalla for us. One may say that to a sensitive lover of art a visit to the Regensburg paradise for the famous is distinctly depressing, while the Panthéon at Paris is hardly better.

Perhaps both edifices are at fault, one carrying the misfit of a Greek temple into Bavaria, the other trying to adapt the misfit of a Christian Church to a distinctively secular building. The unsympathetic interior of the Panthéon at Paris is denoted at the very entrance gates when one sees on its pedestal *Le Penseur* by Rodin, an interesting statue designed for an entirely different emplacement, which really

comes near to being absurd where it stands! The Louvre, the Bibliothèque Nationale, the Sorbonne, or even Notre Dame de Paris would have been a better place for it.

THE AMERICAN A DIFFERENT PROBLEM

An American building which may serve to recall our departed great must start from a different attitude of mind. Neither royalties, nor men of rank, nor statesmen, nor officers of the army and navy can have precedence; ancestry, wealth, race or nationality are equally immaterial. The only general rule for admission to American halls of fame will be character. Naturally enough, there will be many mistakes which later generations will have to cure.

The national Hall of Fame of the American Union as it already exists in the Capitol at Washington is a shining example of the effort to distribute recompenses over the whole country, on a par with the purpose to afford exact equality to citizens and the States. As each State, however small, is represented in Congress by two Senators, so each State has a right to have two pedestals for its heroes in the Hall of Fame. At present that hall is the rotunda of the Capitol at Washington, which is indicated by the dome that dominates the great building as it does the city. The idea that prompted this use of the rotunda was a fine one; for what could be more fitting than to enshrine the effigies of the best citizens of all the States in the heart of that Capitol over which soars the mighty hemisphere crowned by a statue of Columbia? It seems to knit together the ideas of equality in politics, the right of the citizens to the highest offices, popular representation, citizen supremacy! To question the disposition of these statues looks like the profaning of a grand and august sentiment.

And yet, like many another fine thing, this will have to yield to the bald necessity of facts: the Rotunda will have to be given up as a Hall of Fame—for the simple reason that it is no longer adequate to its purpose.

The truth is that the States have grown so numerous that there is not room in the Rotunda to exhibit the statues to advantage. This has been the case for a long time; but a natural dislike to change so admirable a thing has prevented any move to rectify the situation. The truth is that even half a hundred statues are too much for the single hall, if each one is to be given the lighting, the place and the surroundings which a work of art demands—so then, what can be done for a hundred? There lies the insoluble problem offered to the man whose duty it is to keep the Capitol in a state of order and present everything in it to the best advantage, when citizens from every nook and corner of the Union come to see the house in which their representatives carry out the commands of the people! Long ago the officer entrusted with this office raised his hands and wailed: "What is to be done?"

The answer can and must no longer be shirked. Another building is needed, a Palace of Fame, which must form a part of the giant complex in which the old Capitol itself holds the most important rôle.

At present the man who visits the Rotunda for the first time receives the worst impression. Granted that the majority of these statues are not great works of art, but merely effigies wrought from marble by workmen; still, there are exceptions to this

dead level of mediocrity. But even these disappear in the mere number and repetition of male figures clad in the appallingly ugly costume of modern men. Since these are portraits of persons, and moreover arrayed in different garbs, they cannot fall into place as parts of the architecture of the interior; they are not and could not be architectural sculpture. Absolutely, they require isolation one from the other, separate lighting, differing environments. For this the Capitol offers no single space; there is need of an interior adapted to them, since they cannot adapt themselves to the Rotunda.

SEPARATE NEW BUILDING NEEDED

The time has come when the rotunda of the Capitol must be freed from the accumulated statues that cumber and disfigure it. A new edifice must be added to the complex, preferably at some point of the lower level along the Mall. It should have a dome repeating the dome of the Capitol without overbearing it, and should be placed with the greatest care at the best possible location, having regard to the townscape, whether it be seen from Capitol Hill, or from Georgetown heights, from the higher land to the west or from the windings of the Potomac to the south. This building should have room for as many galleries with top or high light as there are States in the Union. Each of these galleries it will be the privilege of the respective States to equip with works of art consecrated to the honor of citizens worthy of permanent representation, not alone the pair of statues which are now shown in the Rotunda but bas-reliefs dealing with historical events dear to each of the States in question—painting or mosaics, tapestries and other hangings—whatever may

seem fitting for such a gallery of fame. The central portion of such an edifice might be employed for statues of Presidents erected by the national government.

A building like the one here proposed [see ground plan, page 160] is merely a tentative scheme offered as one solution of the problem. Each State has its own apartment, and room is allowed for other works of art, whether sculptured or painted, in addition to the two statues already agreed upon.

Another advantage in such a building adapted to gifts from the several States is this: Attention will be brought to play on an important feature, namely, *artistic* representation of each State. This will cause an emulation that will surely result in the withdrawal of inferior statues whose places will be taken by better ones. It will act as a stimulus to artists in all parts of the Union and tend to improve the art of every State. As noted above, the separate apartments will admit a variety of works of art, not merely statues in the round, but sculpture in relief, painting and mosaic.

We add to this tentative plan the reproduction of a competitive drawing for a Hall of Fame made by a contestant for the Prix de Rome in one of the most important contests held by the École des Beaux Arts in Paris. See page 159. Not that it should be regarded as appropriate to the kind of Hall of Fame we need, but that it may contain a suggestion for a Dome such as might befit a design of the sort in Washington, given the grand dome of the Capitol as the controlling feature of the townscape. For such a building as we are considering, the Government, of course, will institute a general competition open to all American architects.

THE ACADEMY AND INSTITUTE OF ART AND LETTERS

THE Annual Joint Meetings of the American Academy and the National Institute of Arts and Letters, held in various cities fell to the lot of New York at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel on the 16th and 17th of November. These convocations of representative writers, painters, sculptors, architects and composers of music, wherever held, have come to be a chief literary event of the season. In 1911 they were held in Philadelphia, in 1913 in Chicago, in 1915 in Boston and on the even years in New York. Those who were present will long remember the one of 1914 at which, gracefully introduced by Mr. Howells, M. Brieux appeared in the traditional and official costume of that body—the green coat embroidered in yellow myrtle leaves, with cocked hat and small sword—carrying off by his dignified and gracious bearing a situation to which in our lack of form few Americans could have been equal. It is no reflection upon the historic and venerated institution of France to say that the American Academy and Institute have no thought of adopting a costume, being content with the modest rosette or bow of purple and old gold which respectively indicates membership. If any one doubts the seriousness of the purposes which these represent, he has only to peruse the Proceedings of eight meeting

already held, which contain many suggestive, critical and constructive papers bearing sanely on the principles and the perils of letters and the arts in America.

It is upon the literary and musical features of these meetings that the intellectual public concentrates its attention, and this year these were of marked interest. The only circumstance of regret was the absence of Mr. Howells, President of the Academy (it has had but one) who at the last moment was obliged to go south. On the morning of the 16th under the chairmanship of Professor Sloane, Chancellor of the Academy, two papers of stimulating and resourceful interest were given. Fortuitously these presented fields of a supplementary range. M. Lanson, Professor of French Literature in the University of Paris and this year holding the same chair in Columbia University, in a polished paper delivered in his own language, considered "The Function of Foreign Influences in the Development of French Literature." M. Lanson was the guest of the Institute and was introduced by the Chairman as easily the first of contemporary French scholars in purely academic criticism. This paper revealed the large horizon of French scholarship and the open-mindedness and generosity which